

HOUSE BILL 665

J1, P1

2lr2700

By: **Delegates Arora, Cullison, Hucker, Kramer, Reznik, B. Robinson, Valderrama, Walker, and Wilson**

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2012

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Health and State Government – Falls by Senior Citizens – Awareness and**
3 **Prevention**
4 **(Senior Falls Prevention Act)**

5 FOR the purpose of requiring the Governor to proclaim each year a certain week as
6 Fall Prevention Awareness Week; requiring the Secretary of Aging and the
7 Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, on or before a certain date, to develop
8 a certain statewide protocol for home safety inspections and to submit the
9 protocol to the General Assembly; and generally relating to awareness and
10 prevention of falls by senior citizens.

11 BY adding to

12 Article – State Government

13 Section 13–601 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 6. Commemorative
14 Weeks”

15 Annotated Code of Maryland

16 (2009 Replacement Volume and 2011 Supplement)

17 Preamble

18 WHEREAS, Falls are among the most serious and common problems that
19 threaten the independence and quality of life of senior citizens and are a strong
20 predictor of whether a senior citizen will need to be placed in a skilled–nursing facility;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Falls are the leading cause of injury–related hospitalization and
23 outpatient visits among senior citizens in Maryland; and

24 WHEREAS, In 2009, 43,855 senior citizens were hospitalized or received
25 hospital outpatient care for falls;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, Of the 581 fall-related deaths reported in 2009 in Maryland, 434,
2 or 78 percent, were adults who were at least 65 years old, which is more than double
3 the cases reported in 2000; and

4 WHEREAS, Hospitalization charges for treating senior citizens in Maryland
5 who fell totaled over \$130 million in 2009; now, therefore,

6 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
7 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

8 **Article – State Government**

9 **SUBTITLE 6. COMMEMORATIVE WEEKS.**

10 **13-601.**

11 **IN RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE**
12 **EFFECT THAT FALLS HAVE ON THE SENIOR CITIZENS OF MARYLAND, THE**
13 **GOVERNOR EACH YEAR SHALL PROCLAIM THE WEEK THAT BEGINS ON THE**
14 **FIRST SUNDAY THAT FALLS AFTER THE AUTUMNAL EQUINOX AS FALL**
15 **PREVENTION AWARENESS WEEK.**

16 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before January 1,
17 2013, the Secretary of Aging and the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene shall:

18 (1) develop a statewide protocol for home safety inspections for senior
19 citizens who are discharged from the hospital following a fall, with the aim of reducing
20 future fall-related readmissions; and

21 (2) submit the statewide protocol to the General Assembly in
22 accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article.

23 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
24 July 1, 2012.